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and no darker (dark enough in all conscience). But here it is now—neither Bedford-brown, Vandyke-brown, Adelaide-brown, nor Flanagan-brown, but a sapless, fatless, cinder black! Nevertheless, such is my resignation under all trials, I shall endeavour to make a meal of it, if possible: do you but leave me in peace—vanish! and I muttered some words in Latin, and gave two or three figurative flourishes with my hands, by way of letting her think I was performing some important ceremony of the church, at which her absence would be necessary. But she stuck fast.

‘Why, thin, indeed, sur,’ she persisted, ‘if you war to praich Latin an’ Greek from this till mornin’, you’ll never convart an ould black wisted stockin’ into a beef-staik!’

‘A what, woman, in the name of heaven!’

‘I said it, sur—a black wisted stockin’ into a beef-staik.’

I stuck my fork into the black substance plentifully covered with onion and gravy. I held it up: it was long, and, like Italy, shaped like a boot; and however it might appertain to the leg, it had nothing whatever to do with the rump-steak I had bought in the morning.

‘Ay,’ sighs Mrs Flanagan sentimentally, ‘sitch things comes ov love an’ larnin’! I was mendin’ a pair ov yer reverence’s black stockings at the kitchen-table, where Jimmy was dhressin’ the dinner. One of the workmen called me out in a hurry, an’ I threw the stockin’ out of my hands upon the table: it fell upon the dish. Jimmy turned his head about for a minnit, and the dog snapped up the mait, an’ carried it off. When Jimmy looked round agin, he seen a black thing lyin’ on the dish, an’ the crathur’s eyes, bein’ blinded with this same love an’ larnin’, he pours the gravy on the top ov it, an’ carries it off to table. So there’s the explanation.’

I still held up the black stocking on the point of my fork: I gazed on it in silence: but the blood was boiling in my veins, and I was on the eve of righteously overwhelming all that had animal life near me with a fearful burst of volcanic passion, when my frenzied eye caught a glimpse of a face at the half-opened door. It was a side-face: the mouth and chin had dropped as if in death, the goggle eyes were fixed and up-turned in all the rigidity of despair—not drops, but streams of perspiration ran down the pallid jaws: motion seemed annihilated, the senses defunct; and one loud, angry word would have been a cannon-ball through the heart of poor Jimmy, had not Mercy or Momus tickled my risibilities at the critical moment, and a long, loud burst of irrepressible laughter closed the scene, and saved his life! At the first burst the delinquent fell on his knees, clasped his hands together, and looked imploringly at me, and in that humble posture remained till I got breath to say ‘I forgive you.’

Now, my friend, tell me can flesh and blood, especially dedicated to the service of the church, put up with such treatment long? Impossible. In addition to my fastings and mortifications on principle, is it not the deuce to be obliged to fast for folly? I have played many a trick on Jimmy, but he is ever more than even with me. I can get no good of him. But this I am resolved on: come weal come woe, Jimmy Delany and Betsy Kelly shall be man and wife on Monday next, and I bespeak your company at the wedding.”

“Agreed; and I think, reverend Father, this is the very best idea that has been struck out by you, or JIMMY DELANY.”

M. G. R.

THE COMMON BADGER.

Of all the animals with which man has become acquainted, and over which he has succeeded in establishing his dominion, none have had greater cause to deprecate his tyranny, and to exclaim, had they the gift of speech, against his wanton barbarity, than the unfortunate creature whose simple and unoffending habits I have selected for the subject of the present paper.

With the appearance and form of this animal most of my readers are doubtless tolerably acquainted, as it is a pretty common inhabitant of this country, and would be still more abundant, were not its numbers checked by that barbarous and brutal amusement, badger-baiting, to which, despite the interference of the laws, hundreds yearly fall victims. In general appearance as well as internal structure the badger approximates closely to the bear, and may, I think not unaptly, be regarded as the existing representative of that once formidable denizen of the wilds of our native land. Like the bear, the badger walks upon his heels, and his legs being very short, and his hair remarkably thick and long, his belly appears almost to touch the ground; a little observation is how-

ever sufficient to show that it does not actually do so. He is a nocturnal animal, that is to say, he sleeps during the day, and at the approach of evening leaves his habitation in search of food; yet nocturnal though his habits, and however closely he may in that respect resemble the predacious tribes, the food of the badger is of such a description that its appropriation injures no one, but is on the contrary productive of great benefit to the agriculturist, consisting as it does chiefly, if not solely, of roots and reptiles, as frogs, worms, grubs, beetles, &c. The badger is, as far as I have been able to discover, monogamous, lives affectionately with his mate and little ones in his secluded burrow, and in his deportment to them displays feelings of ardent devotion and disinterested attachment which many of this poor creature’s biped persecutors would do well to imitate.

The common badger is about as large as a middle-sized dog, from two feet to two feet and a half in length, exclusive of the tail, and about a foot or fifteen inches high. He weighs from twenty to thirty-five pounds, sometimes even more—I saw a badger in Edinburgh about six years ago which weighed forty-seven pounds; such a growth is however very rarely attained. In coat the badger presents a remarkable peculiarity. Among nearly all mammiferous animals the dorsal region of the body is of a darker or deeper colour than the under parts, or ventral region. The colour of the badger is on the contrary greyish above and black underneath. The fur of the badger is thick, rough, and by no means glossy; the skin, with the hair on, is dressed and manufactured into pistol cases. The skin of the head and face may be frequently seen forming the “sporrán” or purse which depends from the girdle of the Scottish highlander; and the hairs of the tail are in great request for the manufacture of paint and lather brushes. The badger is an inhabitant of all the temperate parts of Europe and Asia. In Great Britain and France it is scarcer, from the assiduity with which it is hunted and destroyed. Doctor Richardson has identified various new species in his account of the zoology of the arctic regions. As the object of the present paper is however a sketch of the European animal, I shall not notice any other at present, but merely refer such of my friends as may feel curious on the subject, to Doctor Richardson’s splendid work entitled “Fauna Boreali Americana.”

In its internal conformation the badger presents two remarkable features, namely, in the first place a peculiar formation of jaws, which not merely enables him to retain a firm hold of whatever object he seizes with his teeth, but absolutely lock in such a manner, that he himself does not always possess the power of instantaneously unclosing them; and, secondly, a pouch or bag placed just below the tail, whence exudes a thick and fetid substance. It is upon this that the strong smell given forth by this animal depends.

I had once a badger in my own possession, and the study of his habits afforded me much interest and gratification. He was more than half grown when I obtained possession of him, and I can assure my readers that the task of taming him was no sinecure. The first agent I employed for effecting his domestication was hunger. I kept him fasting for three whole days, allowing him only a little water in his bowl, which humanity would not suffer me to deny him. Starvation, however, did not produce any immediate good effects, and the animal remained as fierce and irreconcilable as ever. It would but needlessly occupy the readers’ time were I minutely to recount the process of taming him; let it suffice to refer them to my late papers in this Journal on the taming of animals. I followed the rules therein laid down, and I had the satisfaction of finding them ultimately successful, after from six to eight months of anxious care, enlivened occasionally by the variety of a severe bite, a casualty for which every practical zoologist must be prepared, and at which it would be ridiculous for him to grumble. I have only to observe, that were any one to present me with a hundred pounds for the mark of every gash received by its teeth, of which the scars still remain on my hands and legs, I should be tolerably rich.

After about eight months, however, he gave up his practice of constantly biting when attempted to be handled, unless under great provocation or excitement, and was not merely so gentle as to be with safety indulged with partial liberty, but would come and go when I called him or drove him from me, would feed from my hand or mount upon my knee, and was, moreover, soon afterwards entrusted with entire liberty without any danger of his running away. He was a very cleanly creature, carefully scraping into one end of his cage whatever unpleasant matters might collect in it, and he always contri-

ved as much as possible to keep his bed free of soil. Finding him so remarkably cleanly, I used to let him out morning and evening, on such days as my absence from home obliged me to keep him in a state of confinement.

I did not of course give him his liberty all at once, but according as he grew tame I used to let him out in a room or enclosed yard, according to the state of the weather, for an hour or two daily, and did not give him his liberty altogether until his increased tameness gave me confidence in his thorough domestication. This creature's diet consisted of bread and milk, varied with oatmeal porridge or *stirabout*, and potatoes boiled soft and bruised down fine with milk, with occasionally a bit of raw butcher's meat. He was singularly nice respecting his meat; indeed I suspect rather from the effects of good living in his easy state of captivity, than from an impulse of nature; for had a piece of meat once, and that no matter how slightly, known the fire, he would on no account touch it, unless indeed when very hungry, and no raw flesh to be had. Milk he appeared very fond of, and would drink freely; potatoes, especially if mashed up with butter or milk, he would always dine heartily off; but, which not a little surprised me, I frequently observed him devouring them raw, and that too in the absence of hunger, and while surrounded with what might naturally be supposed to be more palatable food. He had a very strong and by no means very agreeable smell. I had an old terrier named "Wasp," who had been a good dog in his day, but, weighed down by a load of years, was fast hurrying onward towards the grave. Wasp's teeth had failed him, his eyes had become dim, his clogged and tattered ears scarcely informed him when I called his name, yet his fondness for sport still remained, and he would lie for hours each day at the door of the little yard in which the badger was confined, as if resolved that, though his powers no longer admitted of his discovering and attacking his enemy, yet he would, while he could, inhale the (to him) delightful odour of his favourite game.

My badger passed nearly the whole of his days in sleep, and if I attempted to disturb him, he would be sulky and peevish, and in no humour for play. When evening drew near, however, he might be seen first stirring, then opening his eyes and stretching himself, with many a long and hearty yawn. The process of thoroughly awaking himself usually occupied about twenty minutes, commencing with the decline of day, and terminating with the arrival of darkness. The beginning of night usually found him regularly astir; he was then restless and active, pacing to and fro, examining every nook and cranny, climbing upon everything upon which he was able to mount, and seizing, if out of doors, upon worms, beetles, cockchafer, and snails, and if within, seeking for drowsy flies upon the walls, or for beetles or crickets about the kitchen hearth, or in the cellars when he could obtain access to them.

Many naturalists hold the opinion that the badger sleeps during the winter, or at all events hibernates partially, that is to say, sleeps, like the squirrel, for a few weeks, awakes, and takes a hearty meal of the store of food it had sagaciously laid by in its nest ere retiring to winter quarters, and then, coiling itself up in its nest, goes off to sleep again. Whether this be true or not, I cannot with certainty affirm; but this I can safely declare, that I endeavoured as much as possible to make my badger hibernate, by exposing him to the unmitigated cold of an unusually severe winter, by furnishing him with straw and wool to line his nest, and with a stock of bread, snails, and potatoes, to lay up for winter use. He did not, however, avail himself of my assistance, but remained wakeful as usual during the entire winter. A remarkable fact worthy of notice here is, that although this badger exhibited no inclination to hibernate or sleep during the winter, he did display considerable disposition to aestivate, or sleep during the hot months of summer, for during that season he became languid and drowsy, lost his appetite and flesh, became ragged and foul in the coat, and in short pined away so rapidly that I feared I should lose him altogether; he however revived completely as winter, and that a cold one, approached.

I made diligent inquiry of those who were in the habit of keeping badgers for baiting them, and also of the proprietors of several menageries, and learned from them that this disposition on the part of the badger to become weak and lose its condition in summer, is not confined to isolated individual cases, but is common to the entire tribe.

It is truly astonishing to observe with what quickness and dispatch the badger forms a burrow, for which task indeed he is admirably adapted by nature, in the construction of his

anterior extremities. To give my readers some idea of these powers, I shall conclude the present sketch with the following anecdote of an individual in my possession:—Wishing to increase the happiness of my pet, I procured a female of his own species to keep him company, and while preparing a large enclosure for their reception, I shut them both up in an outhouse: I do not think I was half an hour absent, when on my return I found my new badger gone. A moment's investigation discovered the place of her concealment: the animal had during my short absence formed a considerable burrow under the wall of the outhouse, which, I must observe, was built against a bank forming the side of a road. It was into that bank that the creature had worked its way, and on listening I could hear it delving and scraping at a great rate, about a yard from the back of the wall. I hastily procured the assistance of a mason, who pulled down part of the wall, and by working rapidly, succeeded in overtaking the badger just as she had worked her way across the road to within a foot of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden wall, beside which I lived. I may observe that the ground was by no means soft, the burrow being formed under a hard macadamized road. H. D.R.

EXTRAORDINARY DETECTION OF MURDER.

NO. III.

SOME fourteen years ago there was living in the city of Galway a victualler named Hughes: he was not a Galwaygian by birth, nor originally a victualler by trade; but having settled there some years previously, and married a butcher's daughter, he entered into the business, and thrived apace. At the time we are now speaking of, there were few gentlemen in the county of Galway with whom his word would not be sufficient for a hundred pounds' worth of cattle, and upwards; and the man who was the envy of all his brother victuallers bore strongly the apparent marks of prosperity, and a contented mind in his florid, good-humoured, open countenance. So little do appearances consort with character and circumstances at times!

He was a kind husband and father, and reared his family well and religiously; attending himself regularly to his devotions. He was also a hospitable, off-handed fellow, that would not higgler for a trifle, either in buying or selling; was equally ready to take or "stand a treat" at fairs and markets where his business frequently brought him, and was in consequence a general favourite with high and low. In short, every one said he was in the way of making a larger fortune than had been made in his business for many a year in the city; and every one said he deserved it, as he was an honest, a hard-working, and a worthy man. There were apparently but two drawbacks on his character, namely, a violent temper, which at times hurried him on with irresistible impetuosity, particularly when under the influence of liquor, and a habit of jeering and jibing in season and out of season. These defects, however, as they never led to anything serious, were rather pitied than censured, as being the only blemishes on an otherwise excellent disposition.

Hughes was standing one day at his stall, tapping his highly polished boots with his whip, and feeling his well-filled pocket, as he was preparing to set out on a journey for the purchase of cattle. He was in high spirits, and was liberally scattering about his jibing witticisms among his admiring brethren, when a travelling basket-maker entered the shambles. Instantly Hughes directed the current of his jeering towards the humble newcomer.

"You look as if a good beef steak would lie in your way this morning, friend."

"Be goxy ye might sing that, sir, if ye had an air to it."

"Well, it's lucky there's so many about you, any how, as to tell you the thruth, I don't much like your looks, and wouldn't trust you with your own brogues to the brogue-maker's."

"Faix, may be you'd be right too, sir," rejoined the stranger slowly, as he surveyed, with an eager and a half bewildered gaze, the jiber's face, like one striving to recall portions of a half-forgotten dream, "though it isn't every one that's to be taken by his looks."

"I wish, any way, I had as good a house as you'd rob. But how come you to be trading in twigs? You mistook your thrade surely; it's in hemp you ought to be dealing."

"Faix, if every man got his due," said the basket-maker in a decided tone, "more nor me would be dailin' in himp. But ye needn't be so hard intirely on us, *Mr McConn*."